

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DHA-02
SSM-03 ACDA-07 OES-07 HEW-04 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-04
EB-08 /104 W

-----041726 151754Z /50

O R 151700Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7762
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, JO, PGOV
SUBJECT: CABINET ANNOUNCES EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WEST BANK AND GAZA
ARABS

SUMMARY: THE CABINET DECISION AUGUST 14 TO ACCORD RIGHTS
TO ARABS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA AND THE GAZA STRIP EQUAL TO
THOSE IN ISRAEL PROPER SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A HUMANITARIAN,
NOT A LEGAL, MEASURE, ACCORDING TO A FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIAL. THERE IS NO TIMETALBLE OR FINANCING FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CABINET AGREEMENT, AND IT APPEARS
TO BE A GRATUITOUS POLITICAL STEP. WE BELIEVE THE DECISION
IS A POLITICAL MOVE BY THE CABINET TO ILLUSTRATE
ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE FROM U.S. VIEWS ON SETTLE-
MENTS QUESTION AND TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF INTERNAL POLITICAL
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CONSIDERATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN ITS REGULAR SESSION AUGUST 14, THE CABINET
AGREED TO GRANT "EQUAL RIGHTS" TO ARABS OF THE WEST
BANK AND GAZA STRIP. OSTENSIBLY, THEIR RIGHTS WILL BE
THE SAME AS THOSEOF RESIDENTS (AS OPPOSED TO CITIZENS)
I.E., CANNOT VOTE OR STAND FOR THE KNESSET

OF ISRAEL. THE CABINET COMMUNIQUE CONTAINS AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THREE SPARSE SENTENCES. BEGIN TEXT THE CABINET HELD A DISCUSSION CONCERNING POLICY IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA AND THE GAZA STRIP. THE DETAILS OF THE POLICY WILL BE FINALIZED IN THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR SECURITY AFFAIRS. IT HAS BEEN AGREED TO ACCORD EQUAL RIGHTS TO THE INHABITANTS OF THOSE AREAS. END TEXT

2. THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TERRITORIES (GONEN) TOLD US THAT THE CABINET STEP SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A HUMANITARIAN MEASURE, NOT AS ONE HAVING IMPLICATIONS ON THE LEGAL (POLITICAL) STATUS OF THOSE AFFECTED. GONEN ALSO STRESSED THAT THE MOVE WAS AN EFFORT BY ISRAEL TO PROMOTE COEXISTENCE BETWEEN JEWS AND ARABS. HE SAID THAT THE CABINET AGREEMENT WOULD INVOLVE INCREASED SOCIAL WELFARE AND HEALTH BENEFITS FOR THE ARABS, BUT HE WAS UNABLE TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC DETAILS.

3. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, AMONG THOSE SERVICES TO BE EQUALIZED ARE ELECTRICITY, WATER, HEALTH CARE, HOUSING, AND SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS; CHILD LABOR, WHERE IT EXISTS AMONG THE ARABS, IS ALSO TO BE CURTAILED.

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4. NO TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN RELEASED, NOR ARE THERE ANY DETAILS REGARDING THE FINANCING OF THE CONSIDERABLE FUNDS NEEDED TO UNDERWRITE IT. (BUT NO ADDITIONAL TAXES WILL BE LEVIED ON THE ARABS, THE MEDIA REPORTS.) ONE REPORTER (DALIA SHEHORI--AL HAMISHMAR) WRITES THAT THE CABINET "AGREEMENT" WAS REACHED AT THE SUGGESTION OF PM BEGIN AND WITHOUT A FORMAL VOTE AND/OR A FORMAL DECISION. THIS MANEUVER ACCORDING TO SHEHORI, WAS MEANT TO AVOID OVERTLY PROVOKING THE UNITED STATES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THE LACK OF DETAILS AND FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS SHOWS THAT THE GOI IS MORE INTERESTED IN THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOVE THAN IN ITS IMPLICATIONS.

5. THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION WAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED BY FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON IN HIS REMARKS AT THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE KNESSET CALLED TODAY BY LABOR TO DEBATE THE GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY (SEPTEL). HE SAID THE ACTION WAS POORLY PLANNED AND NOT CLEAR IN ITS IMPLICATIONS, ESPECIALLY IN THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS. BEGIN DEFENDED IT AS

"HUMANITARIAN."

6. ALLON'S CRITICISM WAS FORESHADOWED YESTERDAY BY LABOR MK YOSSI SARID, WHO WARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MOVE "SMELLED OF ANNEXATION." BY HIS OWN ADMISSION TO US, HOWEVER, SARID ONLY COUNTED HALF OF LABOR AS SUPPORTING HIS SUSPICION. IN A MORE TYPICAL ISRAELI VIEW, SHMUEL TOLEDANO, A FORMER ADVISER TO RABIN ON ARAB AFFAIRS AND NOW AN MK FOR THE DMC, TOLD US THAT THE TIMING OF THE CABINET MOVE WAS "NOT CLEVER AT ALL." THE ARABS WILL SEE IT AS CREATING FACTS AND EVIDENCE OF BAD FAITH AT A TIME WHEN EVERYONE IS THINKING OF GENEVA. ALL THE SAME, TOLEDANO SAID, HE SUPPORTS IMPROVEMENTS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE ARABS IN THE SPHERES OF ELECTRICITY, WATER, ETC., "AND SO DID THE PREVIOUS LABOR GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY NEVER HAD THE COURAGE TO DO WHAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IS NOW PROPOSING."

7. SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS INTERPRET THE CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT AS A COUNTER TO RECENT U.S. STATEMENTS ABOUT TALKING TO THE PLO. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, THE AFTER-NOON PRESS IS ALREADY REPORTING "EXTREME ANNOYANCE" ON THE PART OF BOTH SECRETARY VANCE AND THE WHITE HOUSE AT WHAT IS SEEN IN WASHINGTON AS THE LATEST ISRAELI PROVOCATION.

8. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE DECISION WAS ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAL ONE. WE REACH THIS CONCLUSION BECAUSE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ITS IMPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY THE MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES CONCERNED. IN ADDITION TO GONEN'S STATEMENT NOTED ABOVE, IDF OFFICERS TOLD US THE FIRST THEY KNEW OF THE CABINET'S DECISION WAS WHEN THEY HEARD IT REPORTED ON THE RADIO. INDEED, FROM ALL SIGNS, IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY FAR-REACHING EQUAL RIGHTS PROGRAM FOR WEST BANK AND GAZA ARABS LOOKS TO BE FAR OFF, A POINT WHICH ISRAEL'S HALF-MILLION ARAB CITIZENS WOULD LIKELY CORROBORATE. THE LACK OF STAFF PREPARATION AND NOTIFICATION MAY INDICATE THE INADEQUATE COORDINATION TO BE EXPECTED OF A RELATIVELY NEW GOVERNMENT. MORE TO THE POINT, HOWEVER, LIKE THE RECENT DECISION TO LEGALIZE THE THREE WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS IT ILLUSTRATES THE CABINET'S DETERMINATION TO MAKE DECISIONS AND TO BE SEEN DOING SO-ON SETTLEMENTS WHICH TAKE ACCOUNT BEGIN'S INTERNAL

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND WHICH REFLECT INDEPENDENCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FROM U.S. POSITIONS. I WILL SEEK FURTHER INSIGHTS
DIRECTLY FROM BEGIN WHEN I SEE HIM TOMORROW EVEING
(AUGUST 16).
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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